



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

OLC, ADDP,  
ICRO, CFE/

25X1A

November 5, 1969

SECRET

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

FROM: PM/JW - Joseph J. Wolf

SUBJECT: Meeting of Interdepartmental Working Group  
on Symington Sub-Committee Hearings on Thailand

The Interdepartmental Working Group met at 11:00 a.m., November 5, under the chairmanship of Ambassador McClintock, with Ambassador Unger and the DOD witnesses present, to review the state of preparation for the hearings.

Amb. McClintock reminded that the Committee wanted prepared testimony at least 24 hours in advance of the hearing concerned. Amb. Unger reported that they had decided to have a single prepared statement which would respond to all the questions asked. Amb. McClintock said the initial statement should be drawn with the intent of making it public, and should be as comprehensive as possible to present the Administration's case well.

Amb. McClintock reported that the Secretary was now reviewing the Philippine and Laos transcripts, reflecting his concern at the political impact of public records in these hearings. Amb. Unger ran over the points that would be prepared, as covered in the November 4 memorandum distributed. Amb. McClintock suggested to try to keep the testimony within the terms of reference of the Committee, i.e., commitments, and the need to keep the focus off of corruption.

Amb. Unger said that Mr. Tanham would cover counter-insurgency to the extent that he could but might need to call on other agencies for backup. Amb. McClintock stressed that we should keep Mr. Helms out of this hearing if at all possible; if a matter within Mr. Helms' competency arose, the witness should say that he was instructed not to answer.

State Dept. review completed

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There was a thorough discussion of the various aspects of Thai participation in Laos. [ ] explained the scope of the Helms testimony on Laos. It was agreed that, if possible, the witness would say that the matter had been handled in the Helms testimony; if it dealt with something else, for example, the subjects covered in the Sullivan testimony, the question could be taken under advisement and referred to the Secretaries.

Amb. McClintock said that the Secretary believed that witnesses should not give personal opinions and this point of view was echoed by Mr. Mollenhoff, who said there was no need to speculate. A distinction was drawn between professional and institutional judgment and personal opinion, however.

Amb. McClintock suggested that with respect to commitments, the focus should be on the SEATO Treaty as being the source of an extent of the U.S. commitments. Material should not be submitted on the Thai Government's commercial interests, but this should be handled in oral questioning which would have to be TOP SECRET. There was a lengthy discussion of the possibility of going off-the-record, with pros and cons thereof explored. Amb. McClintock noted that there were three most sensitive issues: events leading up to contingency planning, the Thai role in Laos, and corruption. Amb. Unger proposed to handle the first by referring to the Secretary's letter to the Committee of July 21 and saying that if further details were wanted, they could be taken up with Ambassador Martin. The others would have to be handled on a highly classified basis or, in extremis, going OFF-THE-RECORD. He thought Taksin should be referred to Graham Martin, but Mr. French thought that there should be no discussion of the talks leading up to the Taksin plan. Amb. McClintock and Amb. Unger pointed out this was already covered by the Secretary's letter.

Mr. French took the position that neither the bilateral agreement for air defense nor the rules of engagement should be furnished, but the essence thereof could be testified to by witnesses in response to questions.

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General Petitt would handle this. There was considerable discussion as to whether the agreement, as distinguished from the rules of engagement, was an operational plan the disclosure of which would jeopardize U.S. forces, with Gen. Petitt believing that it would not, and State believing that it would be important to put the agreement in the classified record, but not publish it. Mr. French agreed to consider the matter further.

Air Force reported that it was preparing a highly classified document which could be declassified for the record on Task Force Alpha. Amb. McClintock provided Amb. Unger with the Moore contingency press line on mercenaries and Amb. Unger stressed the importance of the Administration initiative to get its story over.

Amb. McClintock stressed the need to get the 48 documents requested by the Committee up to the Committee as soon as possible, if appropriate. It was agreed that USIA and AID would have witnesses ready, if necessary.

25X1A Mr. Knaur reported that Paul had said he was calling a Coast Guard witness, presumably in connection with Loran C. [ ] noted that the full Committee had drawn upon testimony in the Laos hearings to request AID for information on Air America. He thought this might be a precedent for the future.

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COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1. OLC- Mr. Maury

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